



“RENEWING *the* PROMISE *of* SYRACUSE”

A 50 Point Plan for a 21st Century City

the PLAN

As Mayor, I will strive to improve the quality of life in the City of Syracuse by developing and implementing progressive policies steeped in innovation, transparency, community engagement, and a zeal for bold, equitable leadership that provides 21st Century responses to Syracuse's 21st Century challenges and opportunities.

My 50 Point Plan will cover six major policy areas: Economic Development and Job Creation, Education and Youth, Public Safety, Sustainability and the Environment, Community Development, Housing, and Neighborhoods, and Government Modernization and Efficiency. Within each of these six areas I will outline broad goals and the specific strategies which collectively will create a critical mass of public action. This outline will provide clarity to city government that will bring transparency for our citizens, predictability for business people, and a cohesive plan of action that will drive the operations of a united city workforce toward a cogent vision. The policy strategies found herein will also pull from best practices found in cities around the country and around the world. These areas provide the framework for a platform that will usher in an era of innovation and vigor in city government.

While setting goals and defining strategies that will bring about the change our community so desperately needs, the links between these policy areas will also be clearly illustrated. Focused solutions and targeted actions in each area will be imperative to achieve significant results, but it is this holistic and integrated approach to governance that will bring about synergistic impacts and lasting change. Throughout this document you will find an emphasis on coordination within city government that gets departments and their personnel out of their traditional silos and into a more dynamic and creative atmosphere. This atmosphere will be the engine that creates efficiencies in the government and generates multi-disciplinary solutions to meet the complex problems our city faces.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *and* JOB CREATION

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EDUCATION *and* YOUTH

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Section Four

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING *and*
NEIGHBORHOODS**

Section Five

SUSTAINABILITY *and* the ENVIRONMENT

Section Six

**GOVERNMENT MODERNIZATION *and*
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Section One

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *and* JOB CREATION

Syracuse has faced significant economic challenges over the last several decades. The out-migration of industry and manufacturing jobs, the erosion of our neighborhood commercial districts, and the vacancies in our downtown office buildings have strained our local economic base. This has made it increasingly challenging for our City government to provide services across the entire city with lesser resources. Concurrently, these economic circumstances have prevented us from adequately maintaining our ever degrading infrastructure, keeping our young people here at home, and transitioning our local economy to the 21st Century.

Even so, Syracuse boasts significant economic generators. Syracuse is home to leaders in the education and healthcare sectors, and these institutions represent some of the largest employers in the Central New York region. The State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University, Syracuse University, Crouse Hospital, SUNY School of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), and St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center represent some of our City's largest employers. These institutions also present opportunities for fusing town-gown relationships that promote business incubation, provide intellectual resources for business start-ups and expansions, and incentives for our young people to stay in Syracuse to live, work, and raise families.

Syracuse also touts significant natural resources including close proximity to many parks and green spaces and abundant clean water. This resource is becoming a more relevant consideration for businesses around the nation and around the world. With abundant, cheap, clean water the Syracuse area may capitalize on attracting new businesses that might normally pay a premium for this resource in other regions. By marketing this amenity we can bring companies working in food and beverage production, energy, manufacturing, technology research and development, and many other sectors to Syracuse.

Syracuse also has significant "shovel-ready" site resources that may be attractive new and expanding businesses. With buildable lots and downtown office vacancies that may often be referred to in a negative light, these are also opportunities for the City of Syracuse to package certain locations for businesses seeking space for start-up, relocation, or expansion. O'Brien & Gere is a perfect example of a businesses looking to invest in a new location, and with well-positioned sites in our central business district they were able to invest in downtown Syracuse providing their employees with a central location with access to other business and cultural resources while also improving the fabric and economic viability of our urban core.

With existing economic generators, abundant natural resources, hard-working organized labor, and affordable, readily available options for business start-ups, expansions, and relocations, Syracuse clearly has significant opportunities for economic growth. However, Syracuse needs new direction and a new approach if we are to capitalize on these opportunities. We must develop a cogent regional economic development strategy, target areas of our City that are most in need of reinvestment, promote growth in the renewable energy and green technology sectors, streamline the bureaucratic approval process, and maximize the public benefit that comes from the use of public dollars.

It is time to move our city government into a new era of economic development principles and practices that will lead to new growth and private sector opportunity.



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(summary)

GOALS

- **Articulate a cohesive regional economic development strategy.**
- **Stimulate job growth in the City of Syracuse.**
- **Establish Syracuse as a leader in green technology.**
- **Provide predictability and clarity for new and expanding business ventures.**
- **Champion downtown as a priority area for economic growth.**
- **Revive Syracuse's neighborhood commercial corridors.**

STRATEGY #1

Work with the County, MDA, Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, MACNY, and others to forge a unified, coherent and marketable regional economic development strategy.

STRATEGY #2

Work collaboratively with economic development agencies, local colleges and universities, and existing branding efforts to promote a coordinated and adequately funded regional marketing campaign to retain and attract businesses and young people to Syracuse and Central New York.

STRATEGY #3

Leverage the human capital investments and research and development capacities of the Syracuse Center of Excellence, Syracuse University, SUNY Upstate Medical University, SUNY-ESF, LeMoyne College, Onondaga Community College and other educational and research institutions to create new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

STRATEGY #4

Provide a platform for job creation and employee placement that links our educational institutions, our regional economic development strategies, our targeted growth sectors, and existing grassroots workforce development programs.

STRATEGY #5

Use tax incentive and public financing agreements to encourage private sector investment in targeted economic development strategy areas.

STRATEGY #6

Work to attract businesses and create jobs in the key clusters like environmental and energy systems.



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STRATEGY #7

Provide case-manager style positions within the City's Division of Business Development to assist businesses with start-up, expansion, or relocation.

STRATEGY #8

Package local, state and federal incentive programs, such as the New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit, in order to quickly and conveniently present development options to those looking to do business in our city.

STRATEGY #9

Use the City website to clearly outline and electronically facilitate the approval and permitting processes for new or expanding residential or business development projects.

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GOALS

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STRATEGY #1

Work with the County, MDA, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, MACNY, and others to forge a unified, coherent and marketable regional economic development strategy.

While our region is made up of different counties, towns, villages, and cities with different taxing, regulatory and service provision authority the reality is that our local economy operates on a regional level that ignores municipal lines and arbitrary boundaries. The disconnected nature of our government and economic development structures isn't just inefficient, it also hurts our local economy as it limits our competitiveness in the national and global

economy. Syracuse and its metropolitan area has been described as a "weak market economy." We can no longer afford to put so much time, money and effort into uncoordinated, albeit well-intentioned, economic development initiatives.

This is a problem that has been repeatedly cited in reports from the Brookings Institution, to the Onondaga Citizens League, to the American Institute of Architects' SDAT report. I intend to bring together the many passionate and dedicated economic development agencies including Onondaga County, the Metropolitan Development Association (MDA), the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Manufacturer's Association of Central New York (MACNY), and others to forge a coherent regional economic development strategy. A City-County arrangement for a shared economic development office might be one strong step towards real, effective, modernized government coordination.

Unified strategies and coordinated incentives and other programs that can be broadly marketed will provide a clear path to greater economic success and competitiveness for our city and our region. Each of these organizations has already expressed a desire to make this collaboration a reality. The time to harness the collective power and expertise of these organizations is now. As our nation struggles to pull itself from the grip of this global recession we must take bold steps to position ourselves as a metropolitan community with a clear vision for economic vitality.



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STRATEGY #2

Work collaboratively with economic development agencies, local colleges and universities, and existing branding efforts to promote a coordinated and adequately funded regional marketing campaign to retain and attract businesses and young people to Syracuse and Central New York.

Once we have taken steps to formulate a more cohesive economic development strategy for our city and our region that can appropriately position our community for success the next step is to effectively market ourselves. We have become accustomed to the stories of businesses that pack up and head overseas and sons and daughters that graduate college and go away to some other city. We've heard about globalization, outsourcing, and the "brain drain." But we also know that Syracuse is a great place to live, work and raise a family. We need a clear and aggressive campaign to market our city and region to our kids, to businesses, and to the world.

Syracuse can not achieve fiscal sustainability and global competitiveness if it is the northeast's best kept secret. We must work collaboratively to develop, fund and implement a marketing and branding strategy that highlights our assets and presents the opportunities that we know exist right here in our community. This has been a goal of the MDA's Essential New York Initiative, the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Creative Core branding campaign, and many others. We must shed our collective malaise and pessimism.

No longer can we engage in self-doubt and self-ridicule. We must believe in the potential of this place and choose to actively shape the Syracuse we want to see. We must be advocates for the community that we love and that is what I intend to do as Mayor. Through an effective marketing campaign we can show businesses and our young people the assets, the beauty, and the richness of the Syracuse we know and love.

STRATEGY #3

Leverage the human capital investments and research and development capacities of the Syracuse Center of Excellence, Syracuse University, SUNY Upstate Medical University, SUNY-ESF, LeMoyne College, Onondaga Community College and other educational and research institutions to create new jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

We have incredible economic assets here in Syracuse that have brought stability and growth potential to the region for decades. Ours "Eds and Meds" have represented our largest employers in Central New York and the proximity of these institutions to each other and to our downtown urban core is an advantage that we must capitalize on. Relative newcomers like the Syracuse CoE have incredible potential to leverage the human capital that is being grown in Syracuse every year through our educational institutions. We must find ways to empower each institution to grow and succeed while also connecting the graduates and associates from each to opportunities to live and grow their businesses right here in our city.

Too often we see how these institutions establish world class programs and launch cutting edge initiatives only to watch as the students involved go off to become successful doctors, engineers, lawyers, contractors and entrepreneurs in some other city. Programs must be developed that connect those being trained in our colleges, universities, and incubators to real world job experience before they graduate and move on. By exposing these talented young people to all our city has to offer while



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providing hands-on training we can begin to foster a stronger bond with the community. This will make permanent residents out of talented individuals that may have previously viewed themselves as visitors.

Nurturing town-gown relationships that enrich the educational experiences of students while providing invaluable community engagement should be fundamental to how we conduct business, promote entrepreneurship, empower our neighborhoods, and build a smarter city and better government.

Concurrently, the professors, researchers and other top-notch personnel who work at these institutions can be tapped as resources to find solutions to some of the complex challenges we face in the government, transportation, information technology, engineering, and business sectors.

These institutions are some of our most valuable community and regional assets. The next Mayor must not be too proud or too short-sighted to see that their fates and the fate of our region are inseparably intertwined. We can and we must find success together.

STRATEGY #4

Provide a platform for job creation and employee placement that links our educational institutions, our regional economic development strategies, our targeted growth sectors, and existing grassroots workforce development programs.

True urban revitalization is only reached when economic vitality and grassroots level empowerment go hand in hand. If we truly intend to lift up all the people of this city while creating a more robust local economy we are going to have to find ways to link our schools, our institutions of higher education, our

economic development strategies for the region, and programs that exist to train and place workers. Growing qualified workers right here in Syracuse who are ready to seize the jobs of the new economy must be a continuous process.

Luckily we already have strong individual elements of this view. The Say Yes to Education program, our strong colleges and universities, strong economic development agencies, and job training and placement programs like Green Train and CNY Works all contribute to a system that supports individual education, empowerment, and employment.

Certainly these individual pieces must be strengthened even further in order to provide the greatest value and to bolster the entrepreneurial spirit in our city. But what we must also do is connect these elements and provide a platform from which we can bring individuals through the process. We need programming that ties together existing efforts and goes to where people are in order to present opportunities for advancement.

Location- and person-based programming that effectively trains individuals, presents the range of available opportunities, and links high-level economic development policies for our region and its targeted growth sectors with ongoing grassroots efforts will create a more unified and powerful blueprint for individual empowerment as well as neighborhood- and regional-level economic growth.



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STRATEGY #5

Use tax incentive and public financing agreements to encourage private sector investment in targeted economic development strategy areas.

We live in a “weak market” economy. Over the years municipalities like Syracuse have become accustomed to providing public incentives to spur private sector activity. We provide tax breaks, sell bonds, conduct infrastructure improvements, and provide low-interest financing to help businesses grow or get off the ground. It is clear that in a market like ours partnerships like this between the public and private sectors are necessary to drive economic growth and more competitive place creation.

However, what is our rationale for such public sector incentives? Are these incentives targeted? Where are we promoting growth and do those places match our goals for urban revitalization and smart growth? To date, these questions have not been answered. I intend to articulate a clear rationale for targeted use of public incentives as part of my economic development principles and policies.

The patterns of residential growth in America and region over the last 50 years have been clear. Urban sprawl has been the norm for the nation and sprawl without economic growth has been the norm for most northeast cities including Syracuse. Patterns of job growth have been much the same, as noted in the Brookings Institution's report on “job sprawl.” This report notes the significant impacts that residential and job sprawl have on metro areas. Disinvestment in the urban core, costly infrastructure maintenance, complex transportation challenges, and a less innovative atmosphere are just some of the effects of employment decentralization. According to the report only 37.7% of the jobs in the Syracuse metro area were actually located within three miles of downtown.

While this number is significant, illustrating the need for targeted investment for re-centralization, it was actually much higher than most of the other metro areas observed. This is an advantage we must capitalize on before too much time passes. We must target public investment in our downtown and our traditional neighborhood commercial corridors. Our downtown is the economic heart of the Central New York region and our neighborhood commercial corridors are the cores of our city neighborhoods.

If we are to find true economic success as a city we must focus our large-scale economic development efforts in our central business district. If we are to find success as a healthy, walkable, convenient and sustainable city we must focus our smaller-scale economic development efforts in our neighborhood commercial corridors.

We know the economic strength these places have, as is illustrated in reports like the Metro Edge study. A well reasoned and clearly marketed economic development strategy with emphasis on high-density, high-value-added zones will bring together all tools available to our government to invest in smart economic growth.

STRATEGY #6

Work to attract businesses and create jobs in the key clusters like environmental and energy systems.

Efforts and incentives must also be targeted towards key industry clusters. This is another goal cited in the MDA's Essential New York Initiative.



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We are seeing nationally and around the world that business ventures in specialized high technology, information technology, and environmental and energy systems are gaining more and more traction for strong growth. Parallel to that we are finding that innovation in these sectors will be essential to navigating the global challenges of climate change and energy scarcity.

Syracuse and Central New York are well positioned to be leaders in high tech and sustainable industries. We have the educational, research and business organizations with the expertise in these industries and their associated disciplines to provide the human resources needed to spur economic activity in technology and green research and development. This combined with significant natural resources including clean water and proximate agricultural lands will present ample opportunity for major ventures in indoor air quality, biofuels development, and other alternative renewable energy systems.

We also may have opportunities created by some of our past struggles. With the outflow of manufacturing jobs in the region over the last 50 years we are now left with properties and facilities that are well suited to R&D and industrial uses. We have the opportunity to take the facilities that once housed the factories of the old economy and use them to drive the new, green economy here in Central New York.

Cutting edge organizations and companies like the Syracuse CoE, the Syracuse Technology Garden, Sensis Corp., Lockheed Martin, SRC and others are showing us the incredible potential in these fields. If we are to find more sustainable business development in our city and region that creates jobs and promotes smarter, more long-term growth we must place an emphasis on these key clusters.

STRATEGY #7

Provide case-manager style positions within the City's Division of Business Development to assist businesses with start-up, expansion, or relocation.

Business people in the City of Syracuse often cite bureaucratic red tape as a major barrier to successful and timely completion of new business ventures. While we certainly need regulations that protect our neighborhoods and their residents, we also need processes that are more easily navigable for those who seek to grow their businesses in Syracuse.

To that end I will designate employees in our Business Development Division whose sole responsibility will be to work directly with business people who seek permits, zoning approvals, certificates, or other government approvals to make sure they are fully aware of what is required of them, while City departments are responsive to those individuals' needs in a timely fashion.

When my constituents come to me with questions and concerns I deal with them one on one giving them the attention and answers they need to find satisfaction from their government. Business people must be treated with the same level of courtesy and attention in order to help them realize their dreams and allow business ventures to flourish in our city. These case-manager style positions will ensure that each and every individual and company who wants to do business in Syracuse will have someone who can get them the answers they need, helping them save time and money, and present plans and



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business models that will be more competitive in the marketplace and more suitable in the neighborhood.

We must take more tangible, logical steps to convey that our city is open for business. We can not set business people and their potential city customers up for failure. No one can be allowed to fall between the cracks. These managers will help pave the way to success for new and expanding businesses in the City of Syracuse.

STRATEGY #8

Package local, state and federal incentive programs, such as the New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program, in order to quickly and conveniently present development options to those looking to do business in our city.

It is important for us to always explore how we can develop new and innovative incentives to make our city and our region more competitive economically. Perhaps even more important however is the effective marketing of incentives that already exist. Too often are small developers and small business people unaware of the public incentive programs that exist that may draw them to our market and significantly improve their chances of success once they're here.

One example is the newly expanded State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit. This legislation, recently signed by the Governor, will provide viability to many properties in Syracuse and throughout the state that hold incredible potential for economic success with the value-added that comes with unique, historic architecture. Incentive programs like this must be clearly presented and easily accessible. I intend to centralize information on such programs so that those who seek to start, expand or relocate their business in Syracuse will fully understand the opportunities available to them.

I plan to package local, state and federal economic incentive programs using the city website, easy to use information pamphlets and other coordinated media in partnership with our regional economic development partners. With simplified and aggressively marketed program information business people will be able to find the tools that can make their dreams a reality right here in Syracuse.

STRATEGY #9

Use the City website to clearly outline and electronically facilitate the approval and permitting processes for new or expanding residential or business development projects.

While communicating the economic development principles and priorities that we hold and marketing available incentives and other programs, the city website should also be used to make the development process easier for business people and home owners. Bureaucratic red tape and cumbersome, confusing approval processes are often cited as reasons for abandoning projects or leaving the Syracuse area altogether. At the same time we have also seen how confusion in the approval process can create contention between business people and neighborhood residents.

Clear processes and guidelines that are easily accessible for potential developers will remove the element of surprise from doing business in our city. By illustrating approval processes for zoning and permitting, making form access and submission available electronically, listing appropriate city



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contacts, and presenting opportunities to receive technical assistance the city website can allow us to simplify the process for individuals and groups looking to do business in Syracuse whether they're here in town or looking at our community from across the nation. A user-friendly online interface for permitting, zoning, and codes will remove barriers to economic success and vitality for businesses, neighborhoods and our entire city.



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